

VZCZCXRO8959
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #0744 1170706
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 270706Z APR 07
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7345
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

UNCLAS JERUSALEM 000744

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/WATERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: FATAH: INTERNAL DIVISIONS THREATEN REFORM EFFORTS

REF: A. JERUSALEM 687

[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 648

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. 25 senior West Bank Fatah leaders met in Ramallah April 25 to discuss a reform process that would be separate from the West Bank Field Committee's program. Led by Ramallah-based Field Committee and Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) member Muhammad Lufti (Abu Lufti), the group claimed that the Field Committee does not have a mandate to conduct internal district elections and said it will hold elections in Ramallah without consulting the Committee. One Field Committee member has resigned and several others have threatened to do the same if the Committee's composition and mandate are not revised. Several FRC members and Fatah grassroots leaders have lined up against the West Bank and Gaza Field Committees, calling for them to be eliminated or placed under the Office of Mobilization and Organization led by FCC member Ahmad Quraya' (Abu Ala'a). End Summary.

Fatah Divisions

[1](#)2. (SBU) On April 25, a week after Gaza Fatah leader Ahmad Hillis' public attacks on the Gaza Field Committee's membership and direction (Ref A), twenty-five West Bank Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) members and grassroots leaders met in Ramallah to discuss a reform track that would be separate from the West Bank Field Committee's program, according to meeting participants. Led by Ramallah FRC member Abu Lufti and including senior Fatah leader Khalid Matur, the group claimed that the Field Committee does not have a mandate to conduct district elections, and said they will hold district elections without consulting with the Committee. Abu Lutfi named an ad hoc group of Ramallah Fatah members to define membership, and called for Ramallah district elections as soon as possible.

[1](#)3. (SBU) While disputes over Committee composition and functions are not new, Fatah contacts say pressure is building to revisit the membership of the Field Committee, particularly in Ramallah. Fatah's Secretary for Ramallah and Field Committee member Muhammad Yusif Mansur resigned from both his positions April 24, and several other committee members have publicly said they are also considering resigning.

FRC Revolt Divides Field Committees

[1](#)4. (SBU) According to several FRC members and Fatah grassroots leaders, some Gaza and West Bank FRC members are preparing to call on President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) to abolish the Field Committees or put the two Committee coordinators (Hussayn al-Shaykh in the West Bank and Majid Abu Shamala in Gaza) under the authority of Abu Ala'a, as the

head of the Office of Mobilization and Organization. These leaders say Abu Mazen has not taken a position on this matter, but threaten that "if he fails to make the right decision, the FRC will activate the old FRC preparatory committees to hold the elections without consulting with the West Bank and Gaza Field Committees." Fatah activists say many FRC members are coordinating positions before Abu Mazen and Fatah PLC member Muhammad Dahlan return from abroad, and are lobbying grassroots leaders to pressure Abu Mazen.

Comment

15. (SBU) There is increasing pressure to hold elections for the Committees themselves rather just the local and district elections the Committees have been tasked to prepare. Several senior leaders have criticized the appointed committees as undemocratic or disconnected with grassroots activists. There may also be a tactical alliance between some grassroots leaders and members of the FCC and FRC who have common cause in attacking the Field Committees, but who would not otherwise be allied on the issue of Fatah reform.

WALLES